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AGRICULTURAL LIBRARIES SECTION

(Round Table, June 27, 1913, 2:30 p. m.)

Mr. Charles R. Green, librarian of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, was acting chairman of the meeting, which was an informal one without a regular program. Miss Emma B. Hawks, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture library, acted as secretary. The subjects for discussion were (1) Catalog cards for agricultural experiment station publications and (2) The indexing of agricultural periodicals.

Mr. C. H. Hastings first spoke briefly in regard to the printing of cards by the Library of Congress for the publications of the state agricultural experiment stations. Cards have already been issued for the Illinois and Indiana station bulletins, the copy being supplied by the university libraries. Before going on with the work for the other stations, he thought it desirable to consult with the Office of Experiment Stations in regard to a plan of co-operation by which the same card might be used both for the Library of Congress cards and for the "Card index to experiment station literature" issued by the office. It would be much more economical to have only the one card printed, if possible. Miss E. B. Hawks expressed doubt as to whether such an arrangement could be made, inasmuch as the form and purpose of the Office of Experiment Stations card index differ so widely from those of a dictionary catalog. Mr. Hastings thought that it would do no harm to make the attempt and said that he would consult with the librarian of the Department of Agriculture and the director of the Office of Experiment Stations in regard to it. If such an arrangement can not be made he thought the Library of Congress would be willing to print separate cards, having the copy supplied by the station or college libraries, if they are willing and able to do the cataloging.

Mr. H. W. Wilson then spoke in regard to the publication of an index to agricul-

tural periodicals. He stated that he has had a good many demands for such an index and has delayed adding any agricultural titles to the Industrial Arts Index, because it may be better to have a separate one. Those who have written to him about it have almost always expressed a preference for a separate index. Miss Hawks asked whether some titles might not be included in the Industrial Arts Index now, and then removed if a separate agricultural one were begun. Mr. Wilson replied that there was some likelihood of the Agricultural Index being begun next year, in which case it would hardly pay to do anything with the agricultural literature before this. There was some discussion as to the scope of the index. Mr. Wilson said they would wish to include only journals of national standing. Mr. C. R. Green thought that there were not more than about six of these. Mr. H. O. Severance thought there would be many more than this, including papers devoted to special phases, as poultry, bee keeping and stock raising. Dr. C. W. Andrews doubted whether the farm papers were worth indexing. He thought that the matter was rarely original, but that the articles of value are worked up from Station and Department of Agriculture publications. Mr. Wilson said he had had more demands for an Agricultural Index lately than for an index of any other subject.

Inquiry was made as to how many subscriptions would be needed to justify the starting of a separate index. Mr. Wilson could not say definitely. There might be two plans—one, the division of subscriptions among subscribers. The basis for the Industrial Arts Index was 20 cents a title—40 cents for a weekly. The other plan is a sliding scale of charges by which a library having a great many of the periodicals indexed pays a higher price, thus enabling the smaller ones to pay something but not a higher price than they can afford

for the service rendered. Mr. Wilson stated that he was willing to go to the expense of a referendum to find out the wishes of libraries on this subject, with a view either to the starting of a separate index or the incorporation of some agricultural journals in the Industrial Arts Index. If the idea of a separate index is abandoned, he would almost certainly add some titles to

the Industrial Arts Index. Mr. Green thought that he might count on active support of the Department of Agriculture library and all the agricultural experiment stations. He was not sure what further support there would be. Mr. Wilson thought the demand would probably be an increasing one.

Meeting adjourned.

CATALOG SECTION

FIRST SESSION

The first session of the Catalog Section was held Wednesday afternoon, June 25th, the chairman, Miss Harriet B. Gooch, of the Pratt Institute school of library science, presiding. As the minutes of the last meeting had been published, their reading was omitted.

The report of the committee on the cost and method of cataloging was called for, in response to which Mr. A. G. S. Josephson, Chairman of the committee, stated the present report was but a preliminary one, to be followed by a final report next year. The Catalog Section took no action on the report since the committee was appointed by the Executive Board of the Association, not by the section.*

Miss Gooch then stated that the discussion for the afternoon was the administration of the catalog department considered first in its relation to the other departments of the library, and second as to its management of its own affairs looking toward simple, inexpensive and rapid methods of work. She explained that the discussion was concerned with library systems consisting of a central library with a number of branch libraries, and was to be treated both from the librarian's and from the cataloger's point of view.

The discussion was opened by Mr. F. F. HOPPER, of the Tacoma public library.

*The report and questionnaire is printed in connection with the minutes of the Executive Board.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE CATALOG DEPARTMENT FROM A LIBRARIAN'S POINT OF VIEW

In the reorganization of our libraries, in the adoption of modern progressive and simplified methods, in the effort to develop and improve service to the public, the catalog department has tended to be drawn out of relation to the other departments, to become in a way isolated, and as a result its efficiency has been impaired. The attention of librarians has been given to other phases of library activities and therefore they know less about the catalog department than any other. Undoubtedly the technicalities of the cataloging process make it most difficult for librarians to grapple with, but all the more carefully should we consider ways and means of increasing the efficiency of the process, relating the work more closely to changes in other departments, and studying methods of possible simplification of the routine mechanical work that seems to have largely increased of late.

In one of Mr. Carlton's reports to his board of trustees, he uses these words: "It has often seemed to me that in library administration the catalog department was much like the police department in municipal administration. It is frequently under investigation; it is constantly being reformed; its defects are felt in many other departments; and its heads are always changing as one after another breaks down or fails to achieve impossible results."

Surely such an unsatisfactory and un-